

REMARKS

Claims 14-17, 19, 20 and 22-26 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 15, 17, 19 and 24 are currently amended, a new independent claim 27 has been added, and Claim 14 has been canceled without prejudice. Claims 18 and 21 have been previously canceled without prejudice and Claims 16, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 26 remain unchanged.

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's granting a personal interview on October 22, 2008. Cited art, namely, Fitch, US Patent No. 1077877 and Schneider, German Patent No. DE 3222056 was the subject of discussion, along with the invention and the subject matter of the claims. Although no agreement was reached, a greater understanding of the invention was shared by all.

Turning now to the rejections and objections, Claim 24 is under objection regarding use of "a switching device" and "an electrical switch" twice each in a single claim. The claim has been amended to cure the informality giving rise to the objection.

Claims 21 and 24-26 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claim 21 is assertedly unclear with respect to its recitation of a "link mechanism". Claim 21 was canceled by prior amendment. The present rejection is therefore moot with respect to Claim 21. Claim 24 recited "an electrical switch" twice. Claim 24 has been amended to cure the deficiencies and render the rejection under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, moot.

The claims stand rejected under the cited prior art of record. Specifically, Claims 14, 15, 19, 20, 22 and 23 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 1077877 to Fitch (Fitch '877). Claims 14, 15, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by German Patent No. DE 32 22 056 to Schneider (Schneider '056). Claim 16 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider '056 in view of German Patent No. DE 43 09 132 to Michael (Michael '132). Claims 24-26 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted Prior Art in view of Fitch '877.

New independent Claim 27 recites a switching device including an electrical switch disposable between an electrical switch on state and an electrical switch off state, a switching element, and a trip component. The switching element is movable along a response path in response to either an input or an absence on an input to the switching element. The trip component is disposable between a trigger state and a non-trigger state, the trip component being operable in its trigger state to effect a change of the electrical switch between its electrical switch on state and its electrical switch off state, the trip component, in its non-trigger state, operating to not effect a change of the electrical switch between its electrical switch on state and its electrical switch off state. Additionally, as recited in new independent claim 27, the trip component and the switching element are operatively associated with one another such that, when the trip component is in its trigger state and the switching element is moved along its response path, the trip component effects a change of the electrical switch between its electrical switch on state and its electrical switch off state and, when the trip component is in its non-trigger state and the switching element is moved along its response path, the trip component does not effect a change of the electrical switch between its electrical switch on state and its electrical switch off state.

Independent claim 19 recites an arrangement for detecting at least two different positions of a movable door element. The arrangement includes a switching device with a movable switching element and an electrical switch in operative connection to the switching element. The switching element has at least one trip cam disposed thereon for selective movement along a first path wherein the trip cam operates the electrical switch and a second path different from the first path wherein the trip cam does not operate the electrical switch. The switching element is operable to selectively separate the operative connection between the switching element and the electrical switch. The door element and the switching device have an operative connection therebetween and the operative connection between the door element and the switching device is selectively separable.

Independent claim 24 recites a household appliance including at least one electrical load in the form of a selected one of an electrical interior light and an electrical load that is not an electrical interior light. The at least one electrical load is actuatable by a selected one of a switching device having a movable switching element having a trip cam and an electrical switch in operative connection to the trip cam of the switching element with the switching element being operable to selectively separate the operative connection between the switching element and the electrical switch; and an arrangement for detecting at least two different positions of a movable door element including a movable door element in operative communication with the switching device, wherein the operative communication between the door element and the switching device is selectively separable.

Fitch '877 relates to a circuit-closing device for use in connection with doors and is so arranged that the lights may be turned on when the door is open

or closed as selected by a user (p.1, lines 16-21). As seen in Figure 3 of the drawings, a push rod is held retracted under tension of a spring in an inoperative position when the electrical writing is connected to the terminals T but in an operative position in the event the wiring is connected to the terminals W when the conditions are reversed (p.1, lines 91-98). The Fitch '877 device allows a user to connect the control wires for the lighting to terminals T in one case and, terminals W in the other case depending on whether the light should come on or go off whenever the door is open or closed. As illustrated in Figure 1, the lighting wiring T is connected to terminals T such that the connection is complete and the lighting is on when the push rod is extended. With reference to Figures 1-3, when the plate C comes in contact with the projecting end of the push rod and overcomes the tension of the coil spring S, as the door is closed, the slide R will fall by gravity within the slot in which it is mounted and come in contact with the head of the push rod, thus leaving the apparatus in condition to operate when the door is opened. As the door is opened, the spring will throw the push rod out and the plate in coming in contact with the terminals T will cause the lamp to be lighted. The closing of the door will cause the circuit to break by the inner thrust of the push rod breaking the circuit (p. 1, lines 100-112; p. 2, line 1).

Assuming the door is closed and the plate R is at its lowest throw and it should be desired to cause the lamp to be lighted without opening the door, the operator by manipulating the lever E may cause the shaft D to rock and the plate C to be raised into position shown on the dotted lines in Figure 2, which allows the coil spring to throw the push rod out so that plate N will contact with the terminals T thus closing the circuit. After plate C is raised it will allow the push rod to be thrown out, it will be held at a raised position by the rod and, when the door is opened, the plate C will go to the position shown in the solid lines in Figure 2 in readiness to cause the push rod to be thrown in when the door is again closed and which will break the circuit. Should it be desired to reverse

conditions, causing the light to be turned on when the push rod is forced into the position shown in figure 1, it may be done by connecting the wires to terminal W (p.2, lines 1-30).

Fitch '877 is concerned with providing a light switch operable by both a door moving between an open and closed position, and a switch when the door is closed. This switch is configured so that depending on the wiring chosen, the light can illuminate when the door is open and remain dark when the door is closed or it can remain dark when the door is open and illuminate when the door is closed. Such an apparatus is substantially different from the apparatus disclosed in the present application and set forth in the amended claims which provides a door-actuable light wherein the switch itself may be disabled while allowing the switch components to remain otherwise operable, i.e. the striker may continue its linear movement when urged without affecting the electrical switch. In this manner, the switch may remain in an automatically operable switch upon opening and closing the door but the electrical circuit itself may be selectively disabled by operation of the switch.

Schneider '056 adds nothing to the teachings of Fitch '877 and there are essentially no structural distinctions between Fitch '877 and Schneider DE '056 at least insofar as the present invention is concerned. As seen in Figure 1 of Schneider '056, linear movement of a push rod 2 will cause an electric blade connector 5 to engage and disengage with an apparent grounding strip 6, thus making or breaking an electrical connection. There is no indication that the electrical connection may be separated from movement of the push rod while maintaining operation of the push rod and maintaining inoperability of the electrical connection. Therefore, it is respectfully asserted that the outstanding rejection of the present invention based on Schneider '056 is in error.

As discussed during the interview, both Fitch '877 and Schneider '056 fail to disclose any sort of trip cam for selective movement along two paths, with one path leading to actuation of the electric switch by the trip cam and the other path leading to avoidance of the electrical switch by the trip cam. Therefore, the claims are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the cited references taken singly or in any combination.

Michael DE '132 adds nothing to the disclosure of 056 to overcome the deficiencies of Schneider '056 in its applicability to the present invention. Therefore, dependent claim 16 should be considered allowable over any combination of Schneider '056 and Michael '132.

The Admitted Art cited by the Examiner does not overcome the deficiencies of Fitch '877 with respect to Claim 24. Neither reference discloses a trip cam for operative contact with the electrical switch.

For these and other reasons, Fitch '877 does not disclose the subject matter defined by independent Claim 19. Therefore, Claim 19 is allowable. Claim 20, 22 and 23 depend from Claim 19 and all are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

For these and other reasons, Schneider '056 does not disclose the subject matter defined by independent Claim 19. Therefore, Claim 19 is allowable. Claim 20 depends from Claim 19 and is allowable for the same reasons and also because additional patentable subject matter is recited.

For these and other reasons, Schneider '056 and Michael '132, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by dependent Claim 16. Therefore, Claim 16 is allowable. Claim 16 depends from

Claim 14 and is allowable for the same reasons and for reciting additional patentable subject matter.

For these and other reasons, the Admitted Prior Art and Fitch '877, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent Claim 24. Therefore, Claim 24 is allowable. Claims 25 and 26 depend from Claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

The prior art, particularly Fitch '877 and Schneider '056, do not disclose a switching device as recited in Claim 27. For example, Fitch '877 discloses that its push rod I moves in a path in which it alternatively brings the plate N into and out of operative connection with the terminals T and so Fitch '877 does not teach or disclose the feature as recited in claim 27 of the present application in which the "trip component" is in its non-trigger state and the "switching element" is moved in its response path, the existing on/off state of the "electrical switch" remains unchanged. Instead, in the Fitch '877 arrangement, the plate N must necessarily be brought into operative connection with the terminals T when the push rod I is moved along its path and there is no disclosure or suggestion that the plate N can be disposed in a "non-trigger" state. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request allowance of independent Claim 27. Claims 15 and 17 depend from Claim 27 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 15-17, 19, 20 and 22-27 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,



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